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*The speeches of the new United States President Barack Obama are proving to be a popular aid to learning English in Japan. A special compilation has gone on sale, quickly becoming a national bestseller. The BBC's Roland Buerk has sent this report from Tokyo:*

It's been described by its publishers as **a huge hit** in Japan - **a compilation** of the speeches of Barak Obama has sold well over 400,000 copies, and students at an English class in Tokyo are even memorising the new President's words to improve their own pronunciation and understanding.

CLIP English class

'On behalf of the great state of Illinois let me express my deepest gratitude for the privilege of **addressing** this **convention**.'

Barak Obama's message of change has been well received in Japan where politics is often characterised by **grey figures** and **backroom deals**. The clear language of the speeches makes them an obvious choice for teaching material. But the new President's words are said **to hold particular appeal**.

CLIP English class followed by an English teacher

- **Perseverance**.

- Perseverance.

- Just practise like that.

It's from his personality, first of all. And also, his **technique**, his rhythm in English sound beautiful to the Japanese people who may not understand English well but still find his English as something they want to learn from.

And so, in shops across Japan the face of the new American President is **a fixture** on the bookshelves, as well as on the newsstands. And for students, the question of whether they'll succeed in improving their English can be answered - 'Yes we can'.

Roland Buerk, BBC News, Tokyo

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>a huge hit</b>	very popular with many people
<b>a compilation</b>	here, a book that has been made from several separate speeches
<b>addressing</b>	speaking to
<b>convention</b>	a large formal gathering of people
<b>grey figures</b>	politicians or civil servants who don't often appear in public making it difficult to understand exactly what they do
<b>backroom deals</b>	when something is agreed behind closed doors, i.e. not openly
<b>to hold particular appeal</b>	to be liked for a specific reason
<b>perseverance</b>	continuing effort and determination
<b>technique</b>	skill or expertise in doing something
<b>a fixture</b>	somebody considered to be permanently established in a place or position

**More on this story:** <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7857430.stm>

**Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:**

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/02/090223\\_witn\\_obama.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/02/090223_witn_obama.shtml)